

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1, 4, and 19. Please cancel Claims 2 and 21.

1. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a cheese[[.]] or a cheese-like product; a yoghurt or a dairy dessert without removing whey comprising:

(a) providing a dairy starting material comprising casein and a quantity of undenatured whey protein;

(b) adjusting the pH, if required, to a preselected point in the range 5.0-8.0 by direct addition of an alkali or acidulant;

(c) subjecting the material with the desired pH to a cooking step;

(d) reducing the pH of the cooked product to a pH in the range of 4.5-7.5 by addition of [[an]] a food-grade acid or acidulant;

(e) processing and/or packing the pH 4.5-7.5 product to form the final cheese or cheese-like product.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 where the dairy starting material is selected from cheese, skim milk, whole milk, milk protein concentrates, retenates, casein, caseinate, whey protein and mixtures of any of these.

4. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the ratio by weight of whey protein to casein is within the range of ~~0.05-0.75~~ 0.05:1 to 0.75:1.

5. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the casein concentration of the starting material is in the range of 1-30% (w/w).

6. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 5 wherein the casein concentration of the starting material is 3-20% (w/w).

7. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 6 wherein the casein concentration of the starting material is 5-15% (w/w).

8. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the pH at the end of step (b) is in the range of 5.8-7.5.

9. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 8 wherein the pH at the end of step (b) is in the range of 6.0-7.0.

10. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 9 wherein the pH at the end of step (b) is in the range of 6.3-7.0.

11. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein acid is added after the cooking step to achieve a pH in the range 4.5-7.5.

12. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 11 wherein acid is added after the cooking to achieve a pH in the range 5.0-6.3.

13. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 12 wherein acid is added after the cooking step to achieve a pH in the range 5.0-6.0.

14. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 9 wherein after the cooking step the pH is reduced to a pH in the range 5.0-6.3.

15. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 9 wherein after the cooking step the pH is reduced to a pH in the range 5.0-6.0.

16. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the cooking temperature is in the range of 50°C to up to the boiling point of the mixture.

17. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the cooking step is used for 1 second to 30 minutes.

18. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 17 wherein the cooking step is used for a time within the range 5 seconds to 15 minutes.

19. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a cheese[[,]] or a cheese-like product, ~~a yoghurt or a dairy dessert~~ comprising:

(a) providing a dairy starting material comprising casein and a quantity of whey protein;

(b) adjusting the pH, if required, to a preselected point in the range 5.0-8.0 by direct addition of an alkali or acidulant;

(c) subjecting the material with the desired pH to a cooking step;

(d) reducing the pH of the cooked product to a pH in the range 4.5-7.5 by addition of [[an]] a food-grade acid or acidulant while liquid;

(e) placing the pH 4.5-7.5 product into packaging while still liquid; and

(f) providing conditions which allow the packaged product to set;

wherein the steps are performed without removing whey, and wherein the packaged product is a cheese or cheese-like product.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1, wherein the material subjected to cooking comprises a fat to protein ratio of 0-200%.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein step (b) adjusting the pH to a preselected point in the range 5.0-8.0 is performed.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19, wherein the material subjected to cooking comprises a fat to protein ratio of 0-200%.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the cooking step modifies the casein whey interaction of the material.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the length, temperature, and pH of the cooking step are selected such that the final product has a desired texture and physical properties.